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of the early German stage. The first part, that concerning Hans Sachs, leads the author to many positive results, in my opinion at times all too positive. The results of the other investigation are largely negative; little is found in these illustrations that really pictures the early stage and the life on it.

It is greatly to be regretted that an appendix which the work was to have contained had to be omitted to keep the book within reasonable size. The appendix was to give the results of a collation of the Hans Sachs manuscripts with the printed text with reference to the stage directions, the variants of which are given only very incompletely in the Keller-Goetze edition. Herrmann's preface contains the generous promise to put this unpublished material in the manuscript division of the Berlin Royal Library for the use of any one interested.

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CORRESPONDENCE

A NOTE ON *Paradise Lost* IX

An illustration of the truth of at least a part of the assertion that most people believe in the Gospel according to Bunyan and in the Old Testament according to Milton is furnished by the persistence of the tradition of the seduction of Eve by Satan in the guise of a serpent, who during their colloquy stood on his tail.

This tradition is Miltonic, rather than Scriptural:

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant.—*P. L.*, ix, 494 ff.

For thus representing Eve's tempter as possessed of the devil, or in his downittings or his uprisings as other than an ordinary reptile, *Genesis* affords no justification. Here the tempter is described merely as "subtlest of the beasts of the field."¹

The ascription of extreme subtlety to the serpent is universal

¹The traditional wisdom of the serpent had become proverbial by the time of Jesus (*Matt.* x, 16). The saying is quoted as a proverb in the apocryphal *Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, i, 8.

among primitive peoples, and accounts for its association among both the Greeks and the Hebrews with the art of healing. The statue of Aesculapius at Epidaurus represented the god of healing as seated on a throne, holding in one hand a staff with a serpent coiled around it, the other hand resting upon the head of a snake (Paus., II, 27, 2).² A striking Hebrew analogy is furnished by the story of Moses's lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (*Num.* XXI, 8-9). Such a reputation for craftiness, rather than for diabolical possession, accounts for the Hebrew author's objectifying the temptation of Eve as a serpent.

Tho the popular identification of the serpent of *Genesis* with Satan is Miltonic rather than Scriptural, it did not originate with Milton. It certainly is as old as the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, written in the first century B. C., where we read (II, 24), "By the envy of the devil death entered into the world." In the following century the tradition was continued by the authors of the apocryphal New Testament. The author of the *First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ*, for example, affirms it;³ and thru these apocryphal gospels it passed into the thought of the Church Fathers.⁴ Thus St. Augustine lent to the support of the tradition the great weight of his authority, saying in his *De Civitate Dei* (xiv, xi, 2) concerning Satan, "That proud and envious angel . . . chose the serpent, because being slippery and moving in tortuous windings, it was suitable for his purposes."

Nor is the erect attitude of the serpent of the epic, tho unscriptural, without precedent in secular literature. In Aristotle's *History of Animals* (Bk. VIII, iv, 6), we find this amazing bit of unnatural natural history:

"The serpent swallows any food it can find, for it will eat both birds and beasts, and suck eggs. When it has taken its food, it draws itself up, till it stands erect upon its tail (*ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον.*) It then gathers itself up and contracts itself a little, so that when stretched out, the animal it has swallowed may descend in its stomach. It does this because its Œsophagus is long and thin."

With the work of St. Augustine and of Aristotle Milton was entirely familiar. In the posthumous treatise on *Christian Doctrine* (Lib. I, Cap. VII) he mentions St. Augustine, referring with approval to his belief regarding the creation of souls.⁵ Though

² The thirteenth constellation *ὀφιοῦχος*, "The Serpent-Holder," was identified as Aesculapius, Ovid, *Fast.*, vi, 735. To the Greeks the serpent was a symbol of prudence, of rejuvenescence, and of prophecy.

³ Possible even earlier is the reference in the *Book of Enoch* (696).

⁴ The relations of the apocryphal gospels were credited by many of the earlier fathers. The Gospels above referred to is quoted by Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and others.

⁵ Milton's belief here stated "that souls are propagated from father to son in the natural order" is an echo of St. Augustine's assertion (*De Anima*, Lib. I, Cap. XIX, 55), "Animarum autem novarum sine propagine insufflationem, defendi quidem minime prohibemus," and of *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XII, Cap. XX, 3.

he specifically mentions him but once, he evidently had read his works exhaustively, as numerous correspondences amply prove. Milton's identification of the pagan gods with the rebel angels, to mention but a single example he owed to St. Augustine who in the *De Civitate Dei* (Lib. VI and VII) argues at length for such an identification.⁶ Tho Milton nowhere mentions the *History of Animals*, he mentions Aristotle six times in his prose writings, and in terms that imply a careful reading. Of these references five are to the political treatises, while the other is to Aristotle's work on the general principles of natural science (*Physica Auscultatio*, Lib. VIII, Cap. I).

While denying the Scriptural authority for Milton's identification of the serpent of "the Fall" with Satan, and for the serpent's attitude as described in the epic, we must admit that neither is unprecedented nor without a venerable antiquity.⁷

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NOTES ON THOMAS DELONEY

A curious error in Mr. F. O. Mann's valuable edition of the *Works of Thomas Deloney* (Oxford, 1912) has not, I think, been noted. On page vii Mr. Mann remarks that Deloney "appears to have drifted into literature from the more substantial occupation of silk-weaving, and his novels show the most intimate acquaintance with London life, but Nash's epithet 'the Balletting Silke Weauer of Norwich' seems to point to that town as the place of his birth, and it is significant that one of his earliest ballads—*The Lamentation of Beckles* (1586)—was printed 'for Nicholas Coleman of Norwich.'" He refers to *Have With You to Saffron Walden*, in R. B. McKerrow's edition of Nashe's *Works* (III, 84); and on a later page (xii) gives what purports to be Nashe's words: "Thomas Deloney, the Balletting Silke-Weauer, of Norwich, hath rime inough for all myracles."

As a matter of fact the quotation should read, "Thomas Deloney, the Balletting Silke-weauer, hath rime inough for all myracles." Nashe nowhere says that Deloney was from Norwich. Mr. Mann

⁶ The idea is really much older than St. Augustine. Justin Martyr makes a similar assertion in his *First Apology for the Christians* (Chap. v). Its last appearance in a theological treatise is in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* (Bk. I, Chap. 4). "These wicked spirits," says Hooker, "the heathen honoured instead of gods, both generally under the name of Dii Inferi, gods infernal; and particularly, some in oracles, some in idols. . . ."

⁷ I must beg leave to refer to the manner in which one of the earliest scholars of England handles the tradition here discussed. Alcuin's words may be read in Elfric's translation of the *Interrogationes Sigewulfi Presbyteri in Gensin*, *Anglia* VII, 24-26; Alfred Tessmann's dissertation (1891), p. 30.

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